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Identical letters dated 14 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and in reference to the identical letters dated 31 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/921), I should like to state the following:

We categorically reject the false accusations that are once again levelled against the State of Qatar in the letter of the Permanent Representative of Syria, whose regime continues to use the United Nations as a platform to deceive the international community and divert attention from its mass atrocities against innocent Syrian civilians in all parts of Syria. Those atrocities include the following: the use of banned weapons and barrel bombs; an ongoing policy of systematic forced displacement intended to alter the demography of Syrian cities and towns in accordance with discriminatory sectarian considerations and in violation of international law; the imposition of a siege on civilians; starvation; and prevention of the delivery of medical supplies intended solely for civilian use.

The Syrian regime believes that hurling accusations against the States that condemn its policies, which are in flagrant violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, will soften criticism of those policies by the international community. However, the regime's efforts will be in vain, especially given that the reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism established by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which was tasked with identifying those individuals, entities, groups, or governments that used chemical weapons in Syria, have confirmed the regime's responsibility for at least three proven instances of the use of chemical weapons.

The international community has become well aware of the scope and horror of the crimes being committed against civilians, and of the enormous price being paid by Syrians every day. The number of civilian victims of the regime has now surpassed half a million, while some 11 million Syrians have been displaced either within or outside Syria. In addition, the Syrian people's infrastructure has been decimated and terrorism is on the rise as a result of the regime's policies.

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It is laughable for a regime proven by international reports to have used chemical weapons to accuse States known for their contributions to peace and security of complicity in supplying toxic agents. Those same international reports have documented crimes and atrocities, and confirmed what the State of Qatar has been warning of since the start of the Syrian revolution, namely, that the regime has no compunction about killing its citizens using all means at its disposal and then levelling accusations against States that condemn its violations.

The State of Qatar renews its call on the United Nations and the Security Council to adopt a resolution that penalizes the use of chemical weapons and other crimes, eliminates impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes, and stops the Syrian regime from using the United Nations as a platform for making accusations against responsible States that call for adherence to moral codes and legal instruments, support for international efforts to reach a peaceful solution, compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and cooperation with the United Nations to address the tragic humanitarian situation in Syria.

Finally, the State of Qatar reaffirms its support for the rights of the Syrian people under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and reiterates that it will continue to work within the framework of efforts to achieve a political solution in Syria that preserves that country's territorial integrity, puts an end to the ongoing suffering of civilians, and brings to justice those responsible for the crimes being perpetrated in Syria.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Permanent Representative